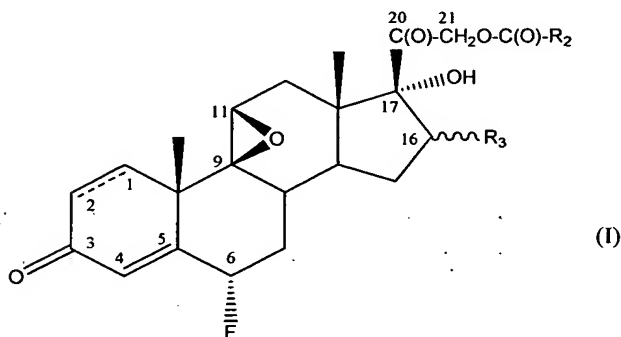


## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

### Listing: of Claims:

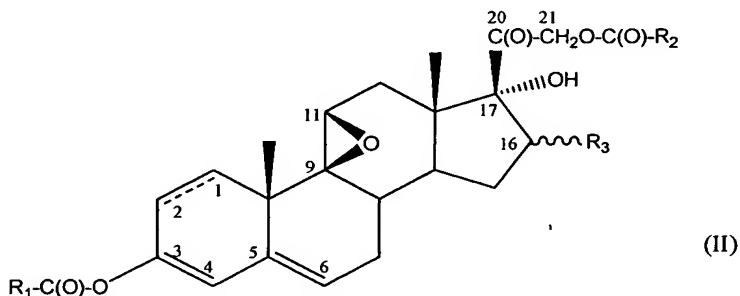
1. (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of 6 $\alpha$ -fluoro compounds of formula I,



wherein

$R_2$  is hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkyl or  $C_3$ - $C_8$  cycloalkyl; and

$R_3$  is hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkyl, or  $R_4$ -C(O)-O- where  $R_4$  is  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkyl or  $C_1$ - $C_8$  hydroxyalkyl;  
 comprising fluorinating at the fluorination of pregnane derivatives in the 6-position with an electrophilic fluorination agent, in an inert solvent and at ambient temperatures, characterized in that  
~~[[1]] a compound of formula II~~



at the 6-position with an electrophilic fluorination agent in the presence of a salt of a strong acid with a nitrogenous base, in an inert solvent, at a temperature from -20°C to 50°C, and under substantially water-free reaction conditions,

wherein

$R_1$  is ~~phenyl or~~ phenyl substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of  
 halogen, hydroxy, amino, mono- or di- $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkylamino,  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkyl,  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkoxy and ~~[[or]]~~  $C_1$ - $C_8$   
 carbalkoxy;

$R_2$  is hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkyl or  $C_3$ - $C_8$  cycloalkyl; and

$R_3$  is hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkyl, or  $R_4$ -C(O)-O-, where  $R_4$  is  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkyl or  $C_1$ - $C_8$  hydroxyalkyl ~~and  $R_2$   
 and  $R_3$  have the meanings given before;~~

is reacted with an electrophilic fluorination agent ~~[[ (2) ]]~~ in the presence of a salt of a strong acid with a nitrogenous base under ~~[[ (3) ]]~~ substantial water free reaction conditions.

2. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein R<sub>2</sub> is methyl.

3. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 or 2, wherein R<sub>3</sub> is hydrogen, methyl or acetoxy.

4. (Currently Amended) A process according to any one of claims 1 to 2, wherein R<sub>1</sub> is ~~phenyl or~~ phenyl substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of fluorine, chlorine, hydroxy, dimethylamino, methyl, ethyl, methoxy, ethoxy and~~[[ or ]]~~ methoxycarbonyl.

5. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the solvent is selected from the group of nitriles, N-dialkylated carboxylic acid amides, ~~[[ or ]]~~ N-alkylated cyclic carboxylic acid amides, ethers and carboxylic esters.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1~~[[ 8 ]]~~, wherein the fluorinating agent is 1-chloromethyl-4-fluoro-1,4-diazoniabicyclo[2,2,2]octane-bistetrafluoroborate, or ~~1-fluoro-4-hydroxy-1,4-diazoniabicyclo[2,2,2]octane-bistetrafluoroborate~~ 1-fluoro-4-hydroxy-1,4-diazoniabicyclo[2,2,2]octane-bistetrafluoroborate.

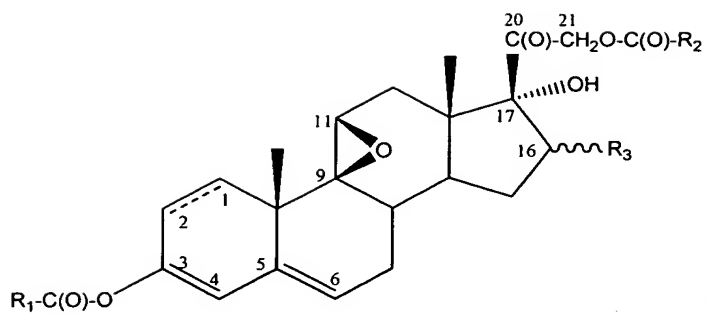
8. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the salt is an amine salt corresponding to formula III,



wherein HB<sup>+</sup> is the cation of an aliphatic, aromatic, cyclic aliphatic or cyclic aromatic nitrogen base, and A<sup>-</sup> is the anion of a strong organic or inorganic acid.

9. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the amount of the salt is from 0.1 to 100 percent by weight, referred to based on the amount of compounds of formula II.

10. (Currently Amended) Compounds of formula II,



wherein  $R_1$  is phenyl substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, hydroxy, amino, mono- or di- $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkylamino,  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkyl,  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkoxy and [[/or]]  $C_1$ - $C_8$  carbalkoxy, wherein  $R_2$  and  $R_3$  have the meanings given in claim 1.

11. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 3, wherein  $R_1$  is ~~phenyl or~~ phenyl substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of fluorine, chlorine, hydroxy, dimethylamino, methyl, ethyl, methoxy, ethoxy and [[or]] methoxycarbonyl.

12. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 8, wherein the amine salt is pyridine methylsulfonate.

13. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 9, wherein the amount of the salt is 50 to 90 percent by weight, ~~referred to~~ based on the amount of compounds of formula II.